ACTION
DC
COMICS
IN THIS ISSUE:
ACTION-PLUS WITH:
the HUMAN TARGET!
20c
ACTION COMICS
NO. 423
APR.
I WON..!
I TURNED SUPERMAN INTO A MURDERER!

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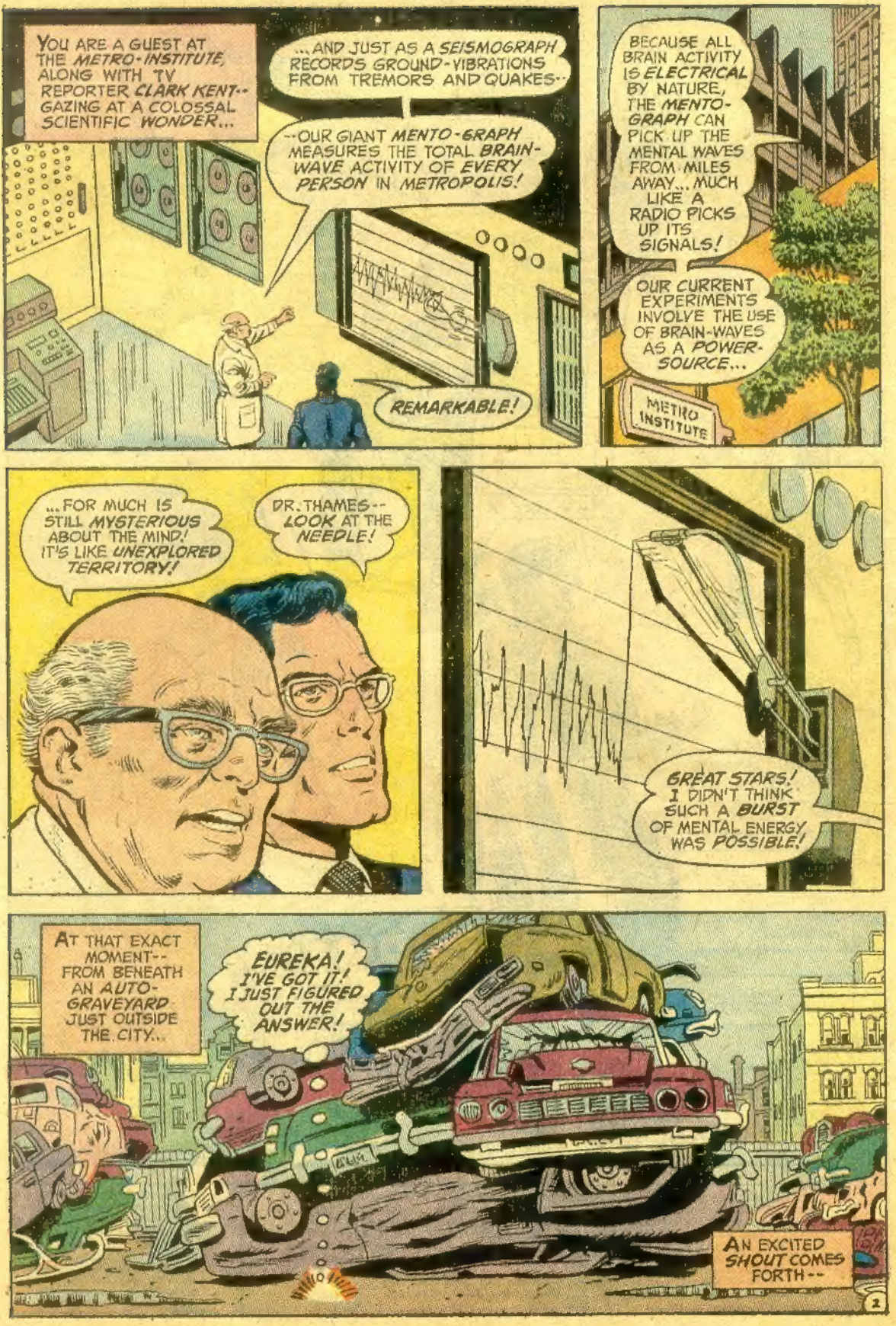
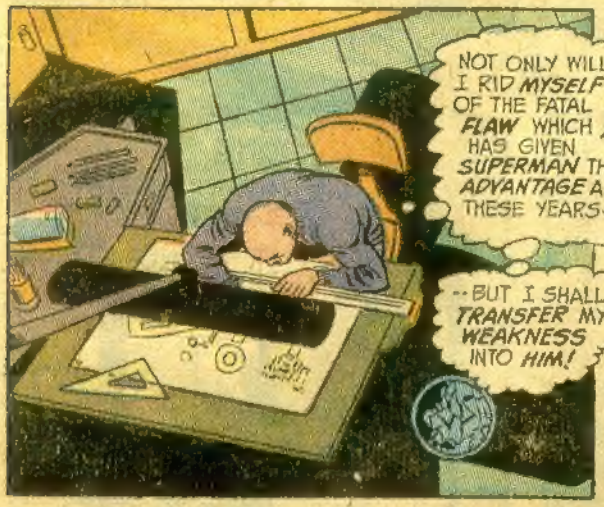

YOU ARE A GUEST AT THE METRO-INSTITUTE, ALONG WITH TV REPORTER CLARK KENT-- GAZING AT A COLOSSAL SCIENTIFIC WONDER...
...AND JUST AS A SEISMOGRAPH RECORDS GROUND-VIBRATIONS FROM TREMORS AND QUAKES--
--OUR GIANT MENTO-GRAPH MEASURES THE TOTAL BRAIN-WAVE ACTIVITY OF EVERY PERSON IN METROPOLIS!
REMARKABLE!
BECAUSE ALL BRAIN ACTIVITY IS ELECTRICAL BY NATURE, THE MENTO-GRAPH CAN PICK UP THE MENTAL WAVES FROM MILES AWAY... MUCH LIKE A RADIO PICKS UP ITS SIGNALS!
OUR CURRENT EXPERIMENTS INVOLVE THE USE OF BRAIN-WAVES AS A POWER-SOURCE...
METRO INSTITUTE
...FOR MUCH IS STILL MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THE MIND! IT'S LIKE UNEXPLORED TERRITORY!
DR. THAMES-- LOOK AT THE NEEDLE!
GREAT STARS! I DIDN'T THINK SUCH A BURST OF MENTAL ENERGY WAS POSSIBLE!
AT THAT EXACT MOMENT-- FROM BENEATH AN AUTO-GRAVEYARD JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY...
EUREKA! I'VE GOT IT! I JUST FIGURED OUT THE ANSWER!
AN EXCITED SHOUT COMES FORTH--
2

--A SHOUT ALL BUT MUFFLED BY THE SOUND-PROOFED WALLS OF LEX LUTHOR'S SECRET UNDERGROUND HIDEAWAY...
IT CAME TO ME ALL AT ONCE IN A FLASH...
...AFTER NEARLY TWO DAYS OF PURE CONCENTRATION... WITHOUT SLEEP... WITHOUT FOOD!


NOT ONLY WILL I RID MYSELF OF THE FATAL FLAW WHICH HAS GIVEN SUPERMAN THE ADVANTAGE ALL THESE YEARS--
--BUT I SHALL TRANSFER MY WEAKNESS INTO HIM!

THEN, WHEN NEXT WE BATTLE... THE ODDS WILL BE ALL IN MY FAVOR, FOR ONCE!
AND ONCE IS ALL I'LL NEED TO MAKE SUPERMAN HEADLINE THE DAILY PLANET'S OBITUARY PAGE!

NEXT DAY, A RENDEZVOUS WITH FELLOW-REPORTERS LOIS LANE AND JIMMY OLSEN...
STANISMON ACTING SCHOOL
GOSH... IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY?
MORGAN EDGE HAS PASSED THE WORD!
ALL WGBS-NEWSCASTERS MUST LEARN TO DRAMATIZE THEIR TV-REPORTING--
REACT EMOTIONALLY TO THE NEWS! LOOK SAD WHEN THE NEWS IS BAD ...SMILE WHEN IT'S GOOD--

THIS ACTOR'S STUDIO THE BOSS RECOMMENDED MIGHT JUST BE THE THING TO OPEN UP YOUR PERSONALITY, CLARK!
--AND RELAX! JIMMY AND I ARE ENROLLING, TOO, SO YOU WON'T HAVE TO GO IT ALONE!

SOON, DIRECTOR ANTON FALENNI PUTS HIS STUDENTS THROUGH SOME VERY STRANGE PACES...
ASSUMING THE ROLES OF ANIMALS DOES MUCH TO RELEASE OUR INHIBITIONS!
HOP HIGHER, MISS LANE! YOU MUST BELIEVE YOU ARE A RABBIT!
SLITHER, OLSEN -- LIKE A SNAKE! AND KEEP THAT TONGUE DARTING!
AND WHEN CLARK'S TURN COMES...
NOW, FETCH, KENT! CHASE THE RUBBER BONE INTO THE WINGS AND BRING IT BACK BETWEEN YOUR TEETH!
GRRR... THIS IS LIKE AUDITIONING FOR ZOO PARADE! SOME BOOST FOR MY IMAGE!
WHERE IS THAT BONE, ANYWAY?
I'LL "CHEAT" A BIT... USE X-RAY VISION TO SPOT IT IN THIS MESS!
BUT WHEN THE MAN OF TOMORROW TURNS ON HIS SUPER-VISION...
GREAT KRYPTON! I OVERSHOT MY VISION INTO THE BANK ACROSS THE STREET--
--JUST IN TIME TO SEE LEX LUTHOR PULLING OFF A ROBBERY!
TIME FOR ME TO EXIT-- STAGE RIGHT!
TELLER
4

HURRY, FRED--GIVE HIM ALL HE WANTS! NO TELLING WHAT THAT GUN OF LUTHOR'S WILL DO!
YOU SAID IT! THE LAST WEAPON I FIRED BLASTED AN ARMORED CAR INTO A PILE OF RUST!
BANK
THINK BEFORE YOU SHOOT, GUARDS! IF I FALL--THE JOLT WILL SET OFF MY WEAPON AND VAPORIZE THE BANK!
DON'T FIRE! HE MAY BE BLUFFING... BUT WITH LUTHOR, WE CAN'T TAKE THE RISK!
NO RISK AT ALL, GUARDS! JUST KEEP WATCHING--!
S-SUPERMAN?!
CITY BANK
AT THAT MOMENT...
STAGE DOOR
HERE, DOGGIE, WHERE ARE--
OH, MY! MR. KENT HAS PULLED A PROVERBIAL FAST ONE AND SLIPPED OUT ON US!
BAH! HE WAS A DUMB DOG ANYWAY!
RATA-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT
?!? LUTHOR'S WEAPON WAS JUST A DISGUISED MACHINE-GUN!
NOW LET'S SEE IF I CAN MESS UP YOUR FACE, "LUTHOR"--!
5

HOLY SMOKE! AN IMPERSONATOR WEARING A LIFE-LIKE MASK!
A TWO-BIT HOOD WHO GOT THE BRIGHT IDEA OF CASHING IN ON LUTHOR'S VERY FEAR-SOME REP!
YEAH... AND THAT BALD HEAD ALMOST GOT ME A BUNDLE!
ZIP!

AFTER LEAVING THE ROBBER IN CUSTODY, THE ACTION ACE SWITCHES GARB ONCE AGAIN...
IT TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE ALARM--
--BUT LUTHOR ESCAPED FROM PRISON OVER A WEEK AGO... AND HE'S STILL AT LARGE SOMEWHERE!
THAT'S A CAUSE FOR VERY REAL ALARM!

YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE IT, SUPERMAN!
ARRRGHHHHHH
A PSYCHIATRIST WOULD SAY I'M RELEASING HOSTILITY BY SLAM-BANGING THIS STATUE OF SUPERMAN--!
HOSTILITY? NO! IT'S HATRED!
CONTINUED ON 2ST PAGE FOLLOWING
6

AURORA

A/FX

Get into the Aurora/Factory Experimentals. Fastest cars you can drive...without a license. Great new models. Each one's built from the ground up. Drive 'em all. A/FX cars. From the Model Motoring Division of Aurora. We're for real.

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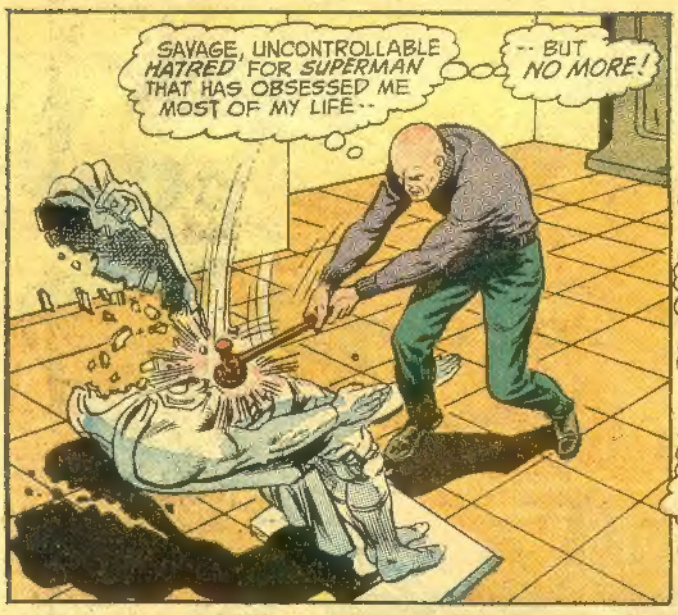
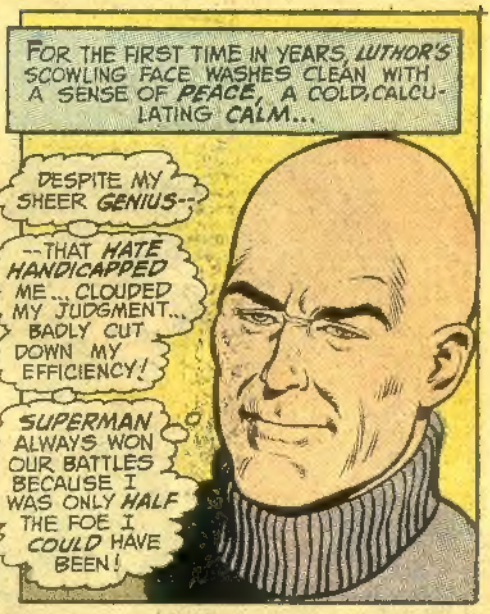
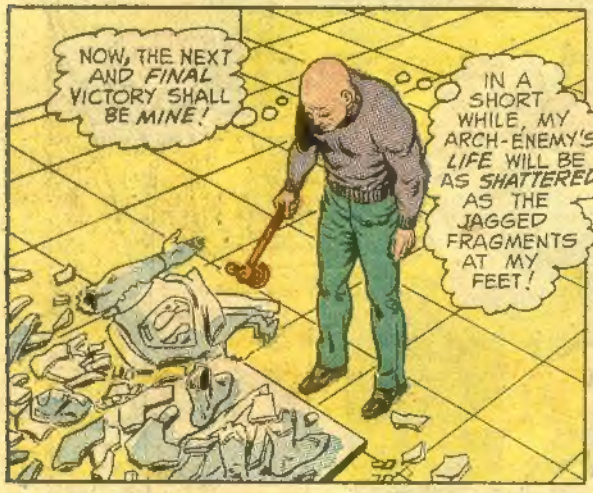
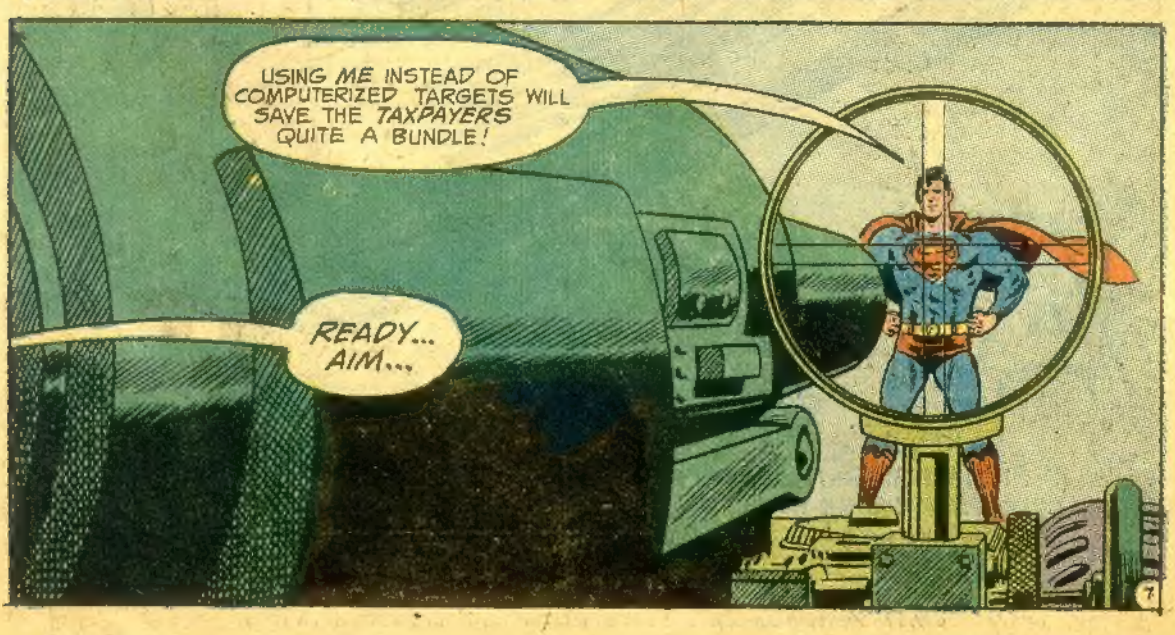
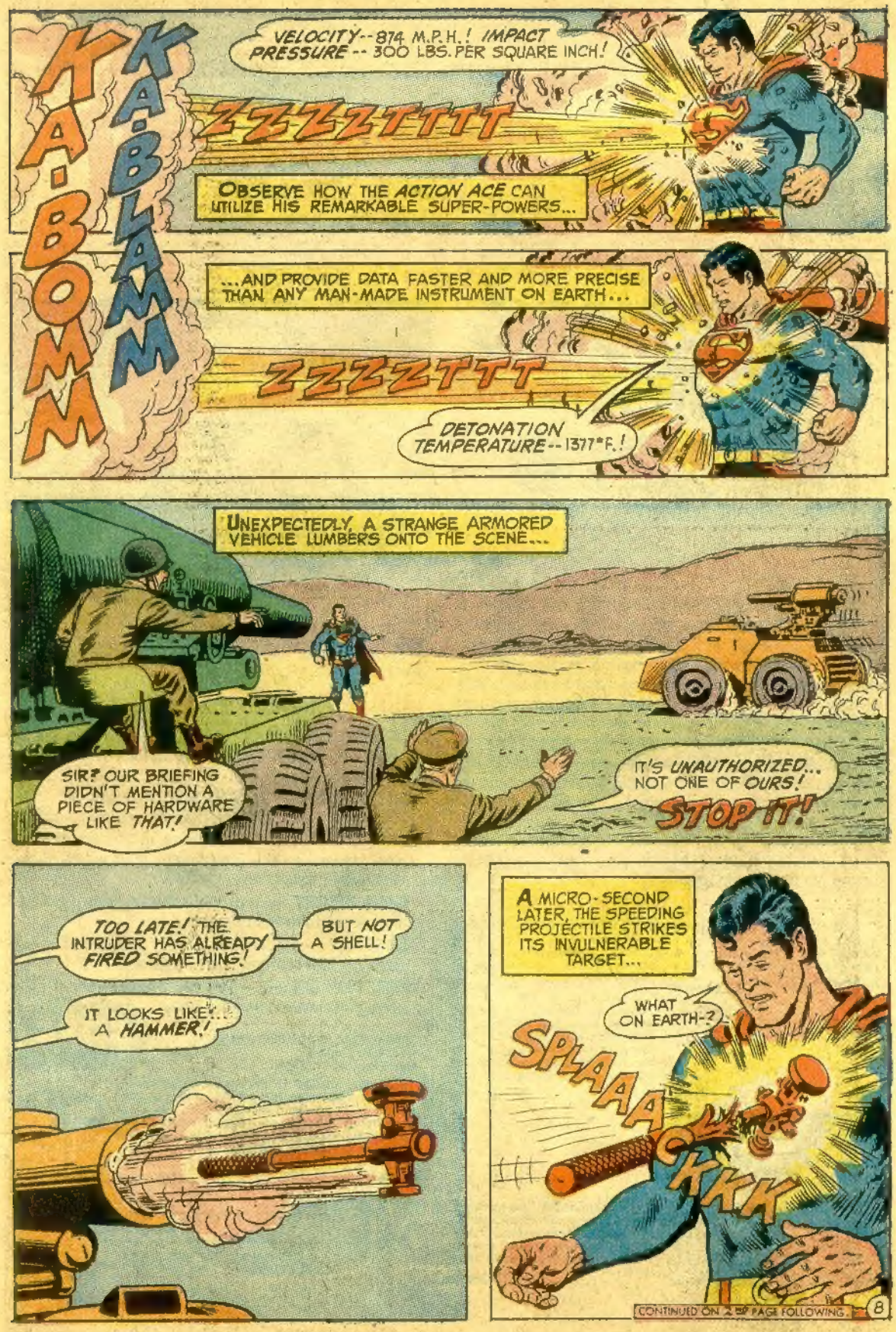

SAVAGE, UNCONTROLLABLE HATRED FOR SUPERMAN THAT HAS OBSESSED ME MOST OF MY LIFE--
-- BUT NO MORE!


FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS, LUTHOR'S SCOWLING FACE WASHES CLEAN WITH A SENSE OF PEACE, A COLD, CALCULATING CALM...
DESPITE MY SHEER GENIUS--
--THAT HATE HANDICAPPED ME... CLOUDED MY JUDGMENT... BADLY CUT DOWN MY EFFICIENCY!
SUPERMAN ALWAYS WON OUR BATTLES BECAUSE I WAS ONLY HALF THE FOE I COULD HAVE BEEN!


NOW, THE NEXT AND FINAL VICTORY SHALL BE MINE!
IN A SHORT WHILE, MY ARCH-ENEMY'S LIFE WILL BE AS SHATTERED AS THE JAGGED FRAGMENTS AT MY FEET!

NEXT DAY, AT A MILITARY PROVING GROUND OUTSIDE METROPOLIS...
DECENT OF YOU TO HELP US TEST THIS EXPERIMENTAL ARTILLERY, SUPERMAN!
GLAD TO OBLIGE, GENERAL!


USING ME INSTEAD OF COMPUTERIZED TARGETS WILL SAVE THE TAXPAYERS QUITE A BUNDLE!
READY... AIM...


KA-BOMM
KA-BLAMM
VELOCITY--874 M.P.H.! IMPACT PRESSURE--300 LBS. PER SQUARE INCH!
ZZZZTTTT
OBSERVE HOW THE ACTION ACE CAN UTILIZE HIS REMARKABLE SUPER-POWERS...
...AND PROVIDE DATA FASTER AND MORE PRECISE THAN ANY MAN-MADE INSTRUMENT ON EARTH...
ZZZZTTT
DETONATION TEMPERATURE--1377°F.!
UNEXPECTEDLY, A STRANGE ARMORED VEHICLE LUMBERS ONTO THE SCENE...
SIR? OUR BRIEFING DIDN'T MENTION A PIECE OF HARDWARE LIKE THAT!
IT'S UNAUTHORIZED... NOT ONE OF OURS!
STOP IT!
TOO LATE! THE INTRUDER HAS ALREADY FIRED SOMETHING!
BUT NOT A SHELL!
IT LOOKS LIKE... A HAMMER!
A MICRO-SECOND LATER, THE SPEEDING PROJECTILE STRIKES ITS INVULNERABLE TARGET...
WHAT ON EARTH-?
SPLAAACKKK
CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING
8

Super

BODYBUILDING COURSE —

INTRODUCING

THE BODYBUILDING SYSTEM THAT GUARANTEES —

[illegible]

At last, NEW bodybuilding secrets are now available for your use. Finally, after years of experimenting we have come up with the fastest muscle building system in the world. Our course really works — **thousands** have taken our course and have obtained fantastic results. Right in the privacy or your own bedroom, you can completely transform your body.

SEE YOUR MUSCLES GROW DAY BY DAY!

You can have POWERFUL MUSCLES FAST . . . not by years and years of hard work . . . but by simply following our fascinating system . . . a system that works so fast you can see results from day to day! Isn't that the kind of course you want? We absolutely guarantee results

MORRIE MITCHELL GAINED 65 POUNDS OF MUSCLE WHILE FOLLOWING OUR 'REVOLUTIONARY NEW METHODS' ON BODYBUILDING.

[illegible]

- DOUBLE OR TRIPLE YOUR STRENGTH in record time! It wouldn't take long before you can perform feats of strength.
- BUILD HUGE — GIANT SIZE muscles — fast. You'll have bulging muscles before you know it.
- TRIM YOUR WAIST by following ultra-modern methods. It won't take long before your waist shows washboard abdominal muscles.
- GAIN WEIGHT — You can actually gain up to 50 pounds of rock-hard muscle.
- LOSE FAT — You'll find it easy to get rid of excess fat and replace it with muscle.
- FEEL 100% BETTER — You can't help but feel great once you own a muscular body.

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J. Johnson

"In just 3 weeks I have gained 1½" on my arms and 4" on my chest. I have also lost 4" off my waist. Your course is just great!"
D. Roberts

"I'm transforming all the fat off my body and changing it into rock-hard muscle. It's amazing — I have lost 8" off my waist. I can actually see my muscles growing from day to day."
P. Williams

B. Abbott

"I have gained 5" on my arms and 12" on my chest, while losing 3" off my waist. I have tripled my power and speed. Thanks for what you have done for me!"
M. Robinson

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Dearborn, Mich. 48121

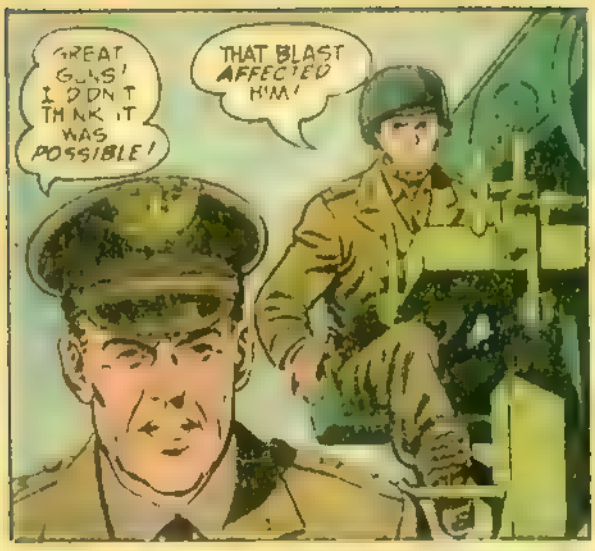
Shoot the 'works' to me free! Rush me all that free muscle-building information, so that I can add inches of powerful muscles — all in the privacy of my home. I am sending 25¢ to help cover postage and handling costs. I am under no obligation. (Please print)

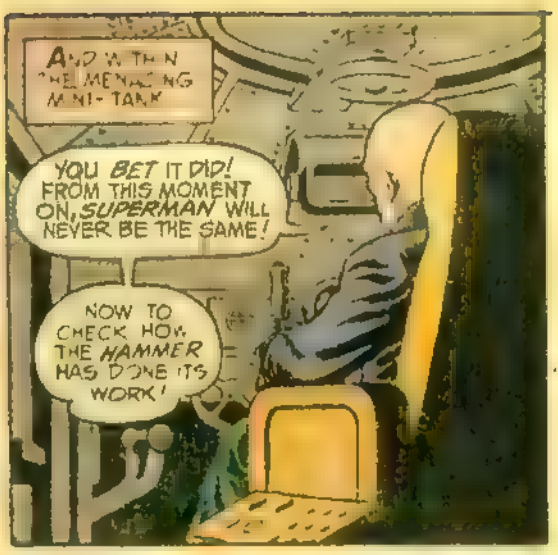
Name_____ Age____

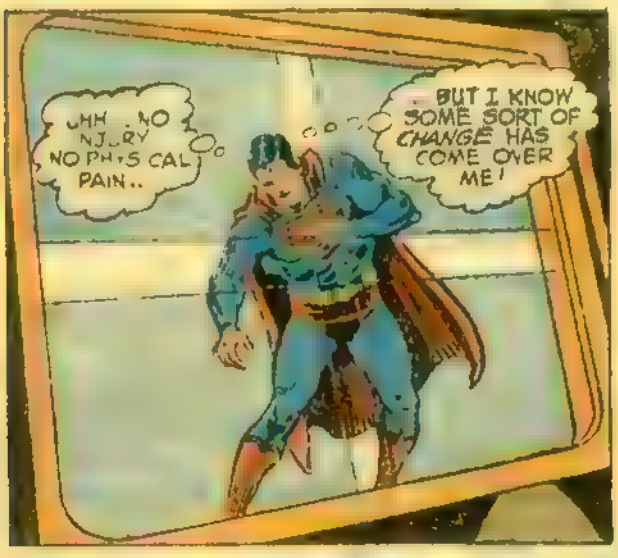
Address_____

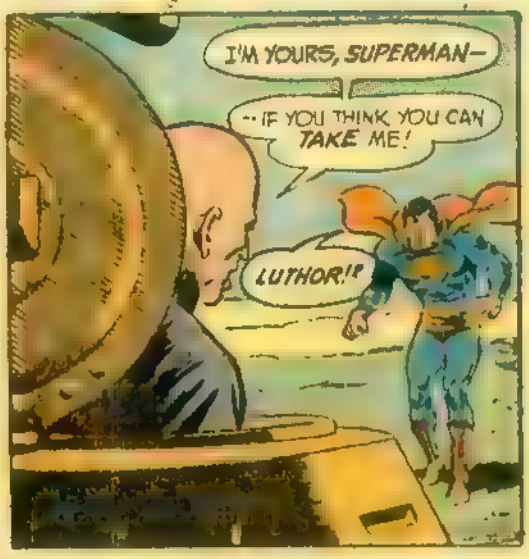
City_____ State_____ Zip____

MAIL TODAY

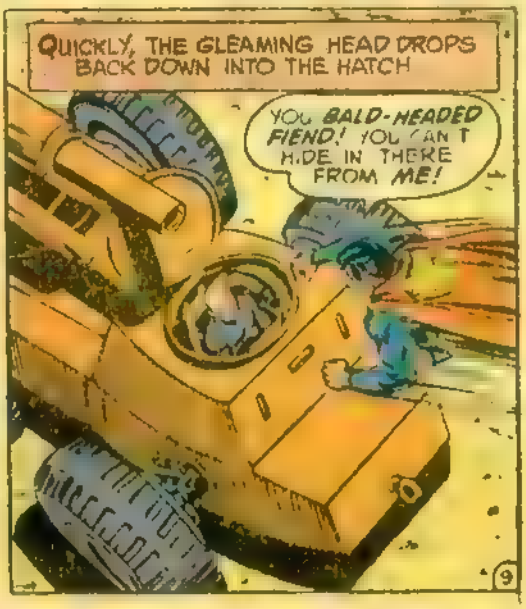

GREAT GUNS! I DON'T THINK IT WAS POSSIBLE!
THAT BLAST AFFECTED HIM!

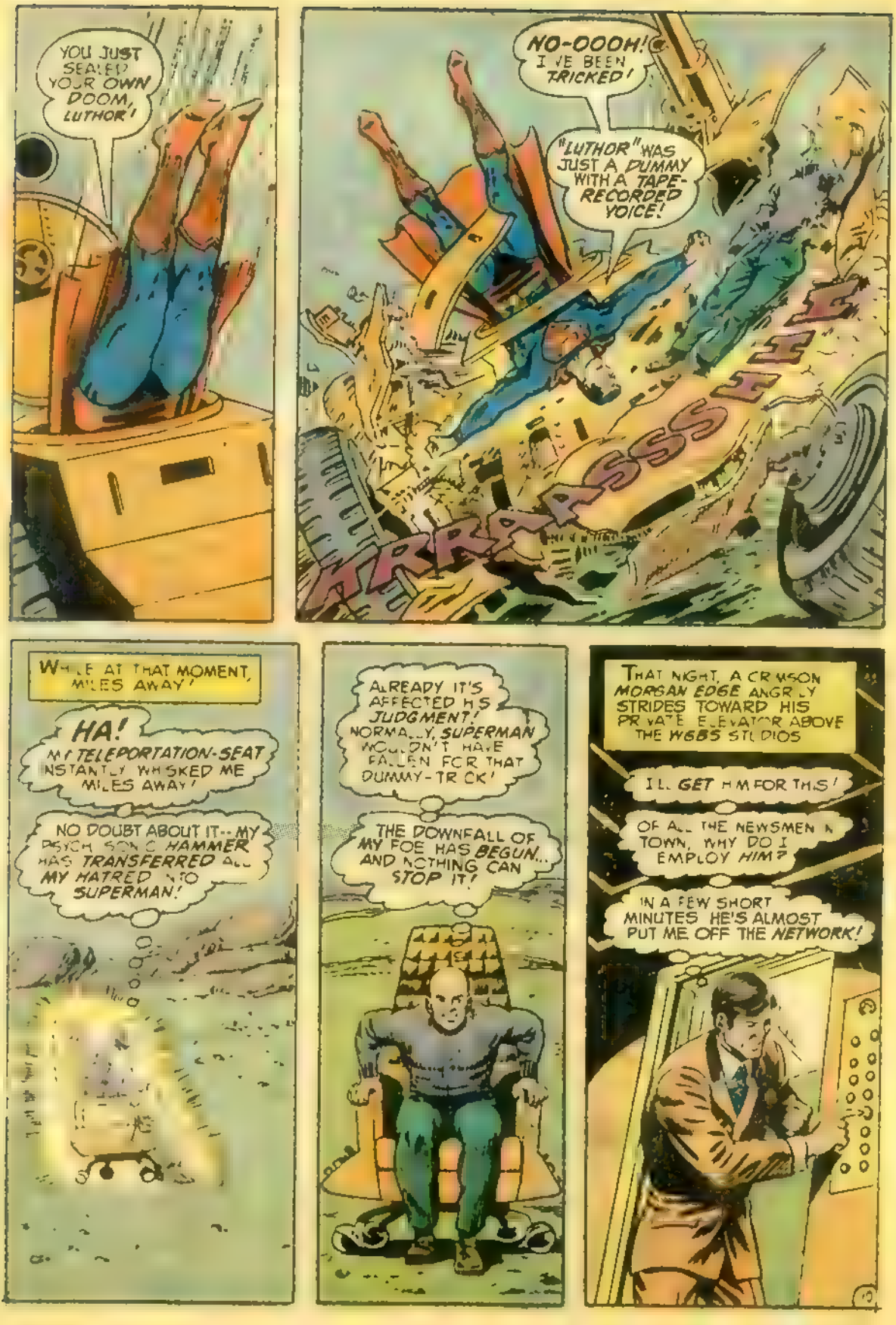

AND WITH THE MENACING MINI-TANK
YOU BET IT DID! FROM THIS MOMENT ON, SUPERMAN WILL NEVER BE THE SAME!
NOW TO CHECK HOW THE HAMMER HAS DONE ITS WORK!

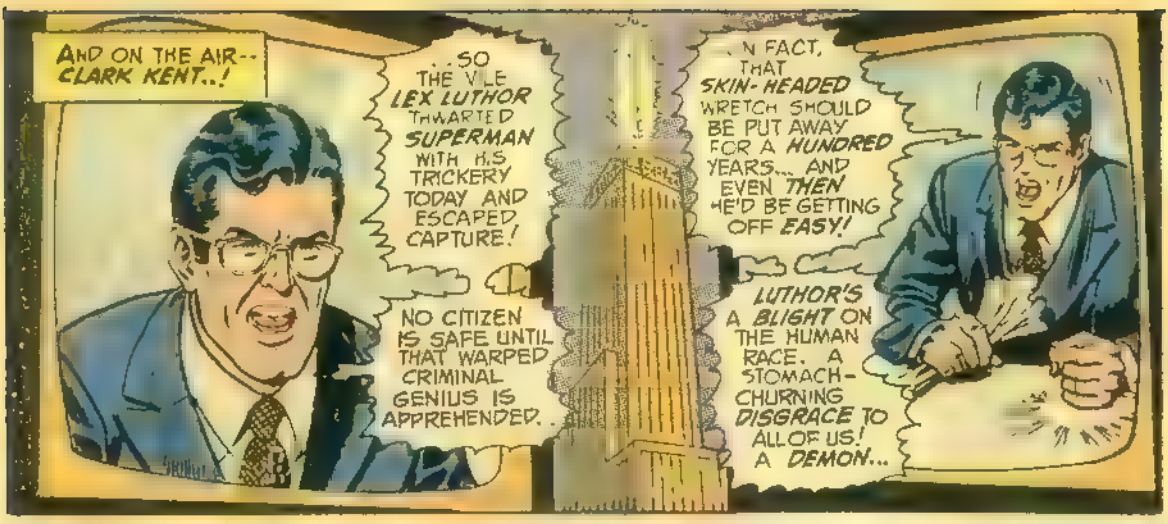

UHH.. NO INJURY NO PHYSICAL PAIN..
BUT I KNOW SOME SORT OF CHANGE HAS COME OVER ME!

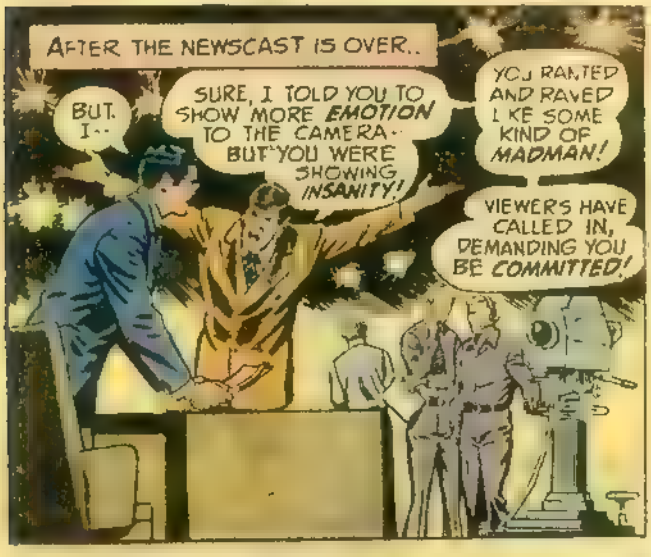

I'M YOURS, SUPERMAN—
--IF YOU THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME!
LUTHOR!?

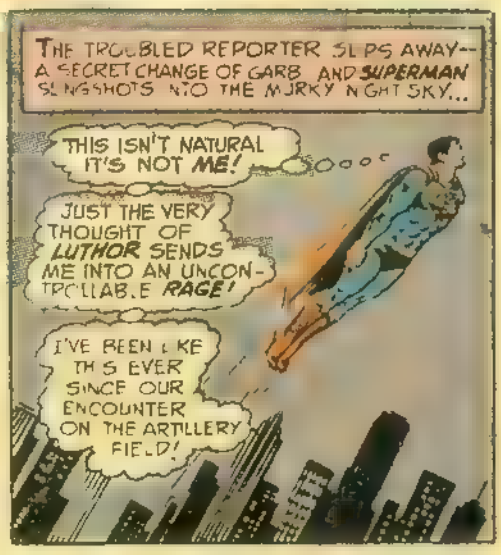
LUTHOR! AS HIS NAME BURSTS FORTH, THE MAN OF MIGHT'S FACE CONTORTS WITH VIOLENT RAGE..
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN IT WAS YOU!
I'LL TEAR YOU APART, LIMB BY LIMB!

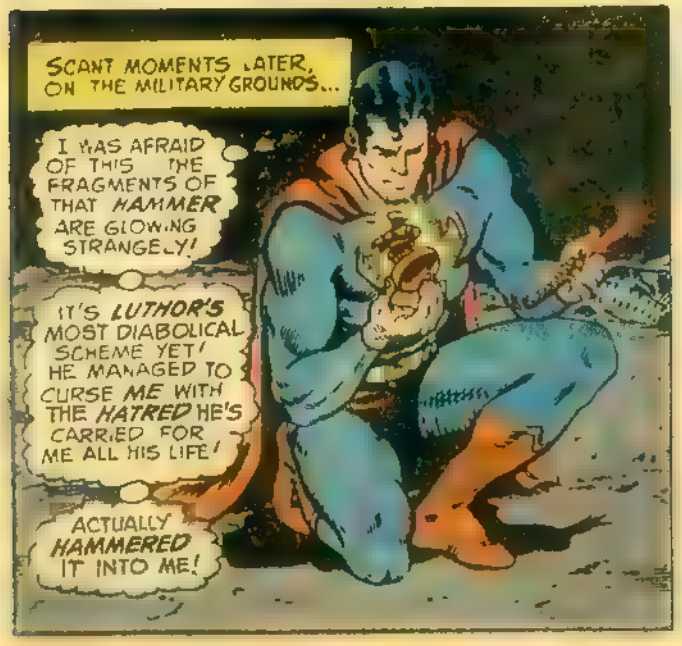

QUICKLY, THE GLEAMING HEAD DROPS BACK DOWN INTO THE HATCH
YOU BALD-HEADED FIEND! YOU CAN'T HIDE IN THERE FROM ME!


YOU JUST SEALED YOUR OWN DOOM, LUTHOR!
NO-OOOH! I'VE BEEN TRICKED!
"LUTHOR" WAS JUST A DUMMY WITH A TAPE-RECORDED VOICE!
KRRRRASSSHH
WHILE AT THAT MOMENT, MILES AWAY!
HA! MY TELEPORTATION-SEAT INSTANTLY WHISKED ME MILES AWAY!
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT--MY PSYCHOSONIC HAMMER HAS TRANSFERRED ALL MY HATRED INTO SUPERMAN!
ALREADY IT'S AFFECTED HIS JUDGMENT! NORMALLY, SUPERMAN WOULDN'T HAVE FALLEN FOR THAT DUMMY-TRICK!
THE DOWNFALL OF MY FOE HAS BEGUN... AND NOTHING CAN STOP IT!
THAT NIGHT, A CRIMSON MORGAN EDGE ANGRILY STRIDES TOWARD HIS PRIVATE ELEVATOR ABOVE THE WGBS STUDIOS
I'LL GET HIM FOR THIS!
OF ALL THE NEWSMEN IN TOWN, WHY DO I EMPLOY HIM?
IN A FEW SHORT MINUTES HE'S ALMOST PUT ME OFF THE NETWORK!

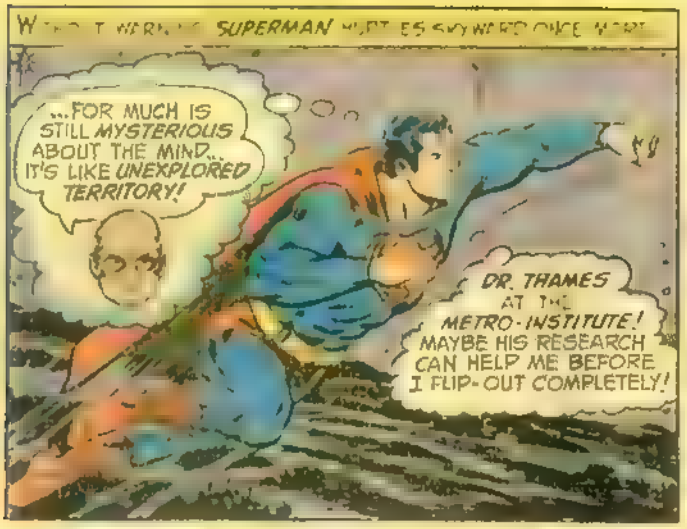

AND ON THE AIR--CLARK KENT..!
...SO THE VILE LEX LUTHOR THWARTED SUPERMAN WITH HIS TRICKERY TODAY AND ESCAPED CAPTURE!
NO CITIZEN IS SAFE UNTIL THAT WARPED CRIMINAL GENIUS IS APPREHENDED..
IN FACT, THAT SKIN-HEADED WRETCH SHOULD BE PUT AWAY FOR A HUNDRED YEARS... AND EVEN THEN HE'D BE GETTING OFF EASY!
LUTHOR'S A BLIGHT ON THE HUMAN RACE. A STOMACH-CHURNING DISGRACE TO ALL OF US! A DEMON...

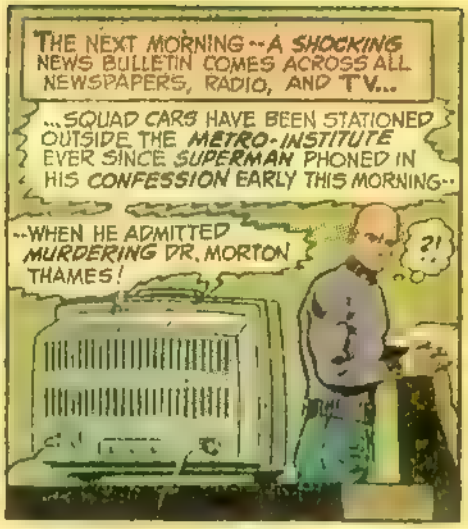

AFTER THE NEWSCAST IS OVER..
BUT. I--
SURE, I TOLD YOU TO SHOW MORE EMOTION TO THE CAMERA-- BUT YOU WERE SHOWING INSANITY!
YOU RANTED AND RAVED LIKE SOME KIND OF MADMAN!
VIEWER'S HAVE CALLED IN, DEMANDING YOU BE COMMITTED!

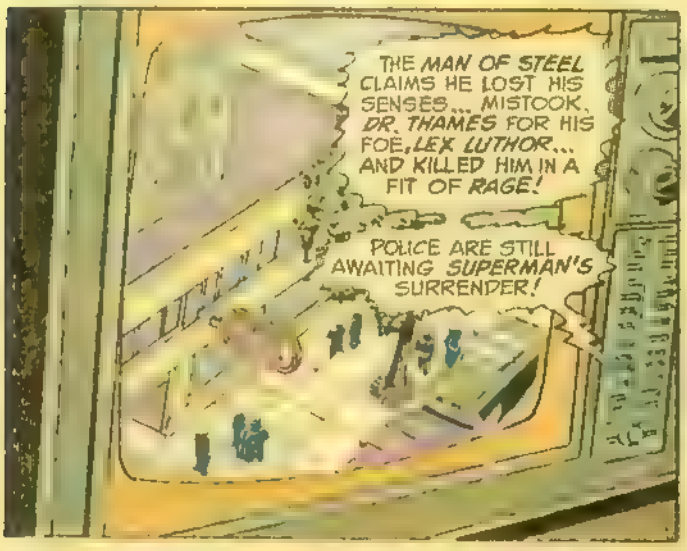

THE TROUBLED REPORTER SLIPS AWAY-- A SECRET CHANGE OF GARB AND SUPERMAN SLINGSHOTS INTO THE MURKY NIGHT SKY...
THIS ISN'T NATURAL IT'S NOT ME!
JUST THE VERY THOUGHT OF LUTHOR SENDS ME INTO AN UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE!
I'VE BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE OUR ENCOUNTER ON THE ARTILLERY FIELD!


SCANT MOMENTS LATER, ON THE MILITARY GROUNDS...
I WAS AFRAID OF THIS THE FRAGMENTS OF THAT HAMMER ARE GLOWING STRANGELY!
IT'S LUTHOR'S MOST DIABOLICAL SCHEME YET! HE MANAGED TO CURSE ME WITH THE HATRED HE'S CARRIED FOR ME ALL HIS LIFE!
ACTUALLY HAMMERED IT INTO ME!

UHHH..
IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN! THINKING OF LUTHOR IS THROWING ME INTO AN ANGRY FIT!
AND WITH MY SUPER POWERS --ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN IF I LOST CONTROL OF MYSELF!
MY BRAIN IS LIKE A TIME-BOMB.. WITH A SHORT FUSE THAT CAN GO ANYTIME!


...FOR MUCH IS STILL MYSTERIOUS ABOUT THE MIND... IT'S LIKE UNEXPLORED TERRITORY!
DR. THAMES AT THE METRO-INSTITUTE! MAYBE HIS RESEARCH CAN HELP ME BEFORE I FLIP-OUT COMPLETELY!


THE NEXT MORNING--A SHOCKING NEWS BULLETIN COMES ACROSS ALL NEWSPAPERS, RADIO, AND TV...
...SQUAD CARS HAVE BEEN STATIONED OUTSIDE THE METRO-INSTITUTE EVER SINCE SUPERMAN PHONED IN HIS CONFESSION EARLY THIS MORNING--
--WHEN HE ADMITTED MURDERING DR. MORTON THAMES!
?!


THE MAN OF STEEL CLAIMS HE LOST HIS SENSES... MISTOOK, DR. THAMES FOR HIS FOE, LEX LUTHOR... AND KILLED HIM IN A FIT OF RAGE!
POLICE ARE STILL AWAITING SUPERMAN'S SURRENDER!

SUCCESS--
SUPERMAN COULDN'T COPE WITH HATRED LIKE I COULD! IT'S TAKEN CONTROL OF HIM. WARPED HIS MIND TO THE BREAKING POINT!

BUT I'M AS COOL AND COLLECTED AS A COMPUTER!
I'LL TELEPORT MYSELF TO THE INSTITUTE DELIVER MY DEATH-BLOW AND GOOD
--FOREVER!

A SPLIT-SECOND LATER, AS THE FANTASTIC SEAT
MATERIALIZES ITS PASSENGER...
IT'S TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE! I MADE SUPERMAN A MURDERER!

REWARD!

$80.00 pr[illegible] coins: (1958, 1955DD, 1960). Do you know which one? Did you spend this coin today? Many other coins will bring you over $1,000.00. Mrs. F. S. Gill of Chicago just sold her coins for $4,780.00. Our new, special , 1973 Co[illegible] dealer guarantees to pay for hun[illegible]

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[illegible] ... 1961	$750.00

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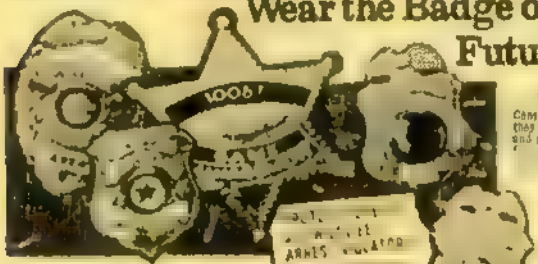

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Conservation [illegible] they offer [illegible] and job qual[illegible]

[illegible] job titles recently reported to us by our graduates:

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Game Warden
[illegible]

FOREST & PARK SERVICE
[illegible]

FISHERIES SERVICE
Fish Warden
[illegible]

Forestry Technician
[illegible]

PROFESSIONAL HUNTER
[illegible]
Hunting Guide
Wilderness Guide

INDUSTRY
Game Farm Manager
Game Preserve Manager
Nature Center Manager
Tree Farm Manager

Here's What Students Say:

NAMED WARDEN IN CHARGE OF HAWAIIAN [illegible]

[illegible] JOB FIRST DAY [illegible]

[illegible] Hodgens, CO

MEASURES FLOWS OF ARCTIC LAKES! [illegible] my job with the Wate[illegible] survey [illegible] over northern [illegible] boats, shelters, snowshoes & [illegible] especially. It's an extremely exciting [illegible] N. Grant, Canada.

North American is America's largest School of Conservation and has trained more men in Conservation than any other school of its type.

[illegible] or life with [illegible]

[illegible] KIT"—[illegible] in [illegible] Conservation & [illegible]

Although we are not connected with the Government and [illegible] existing outdoor [illegible] now. Fine starting [illegible]

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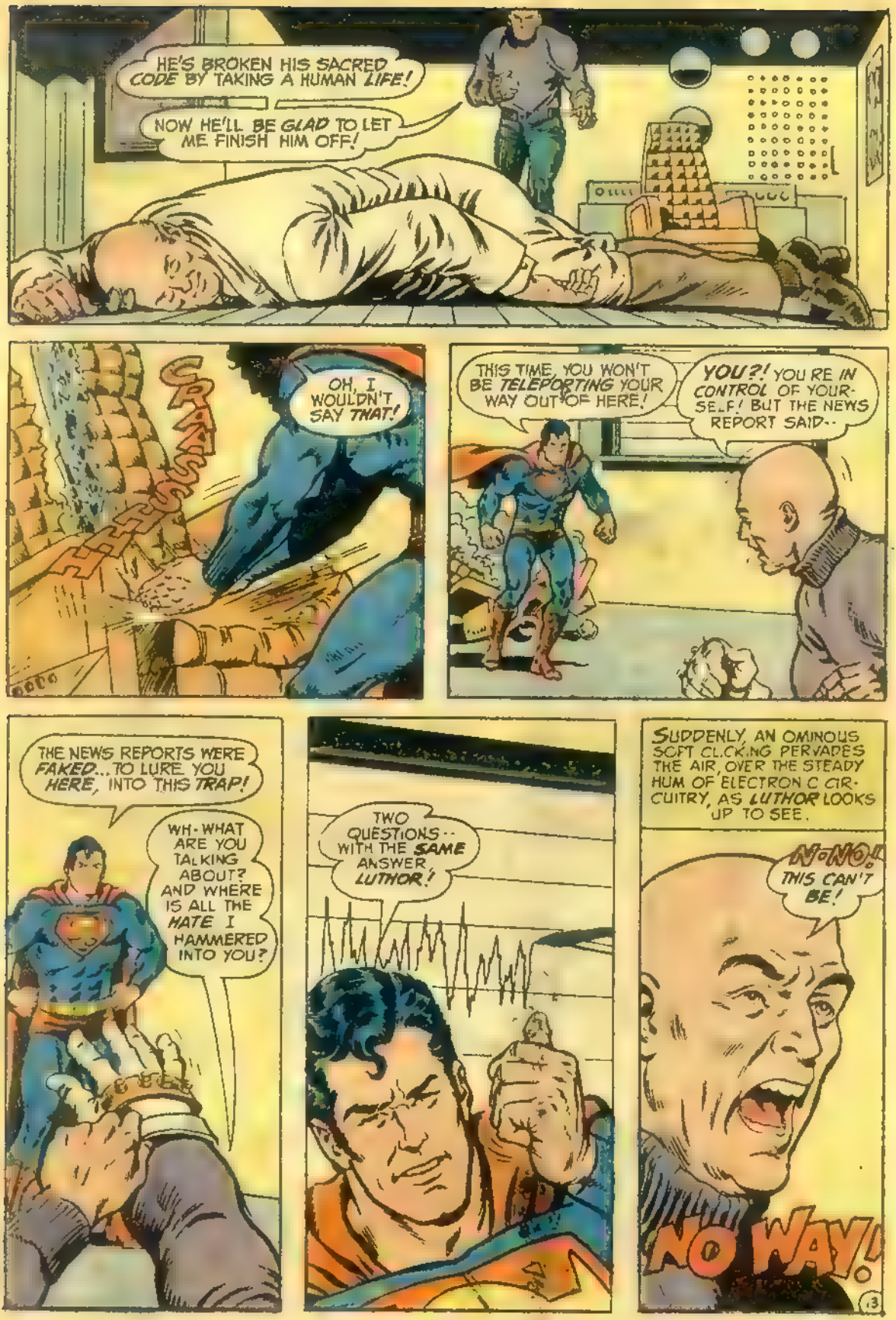
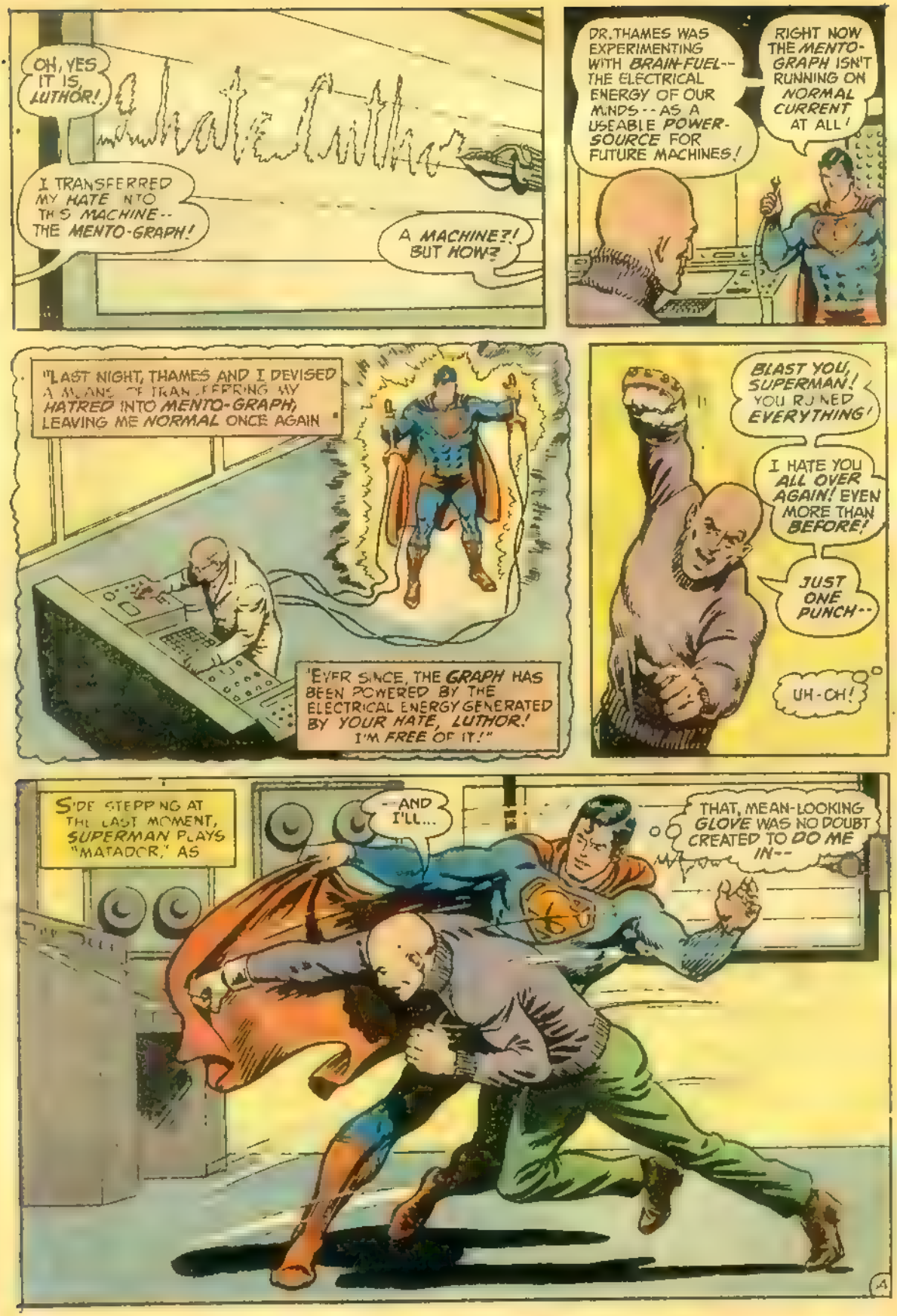
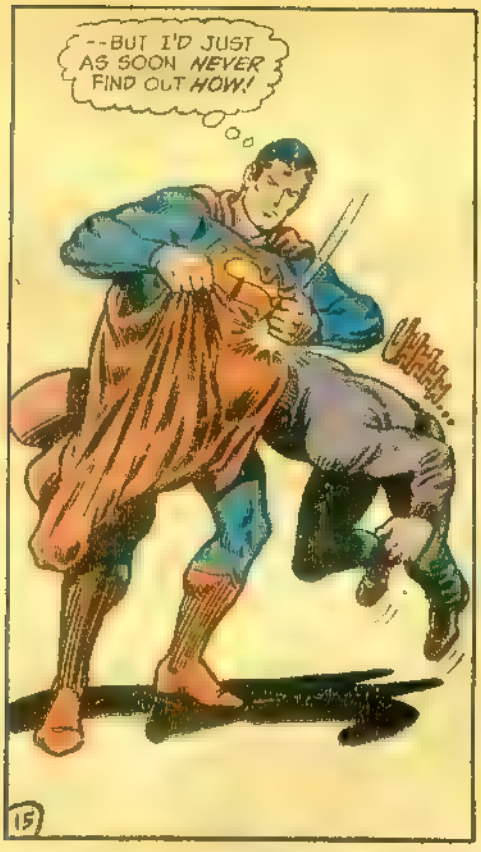
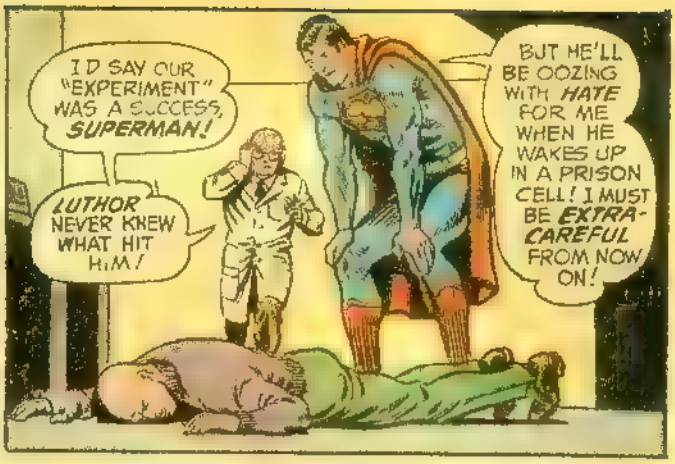
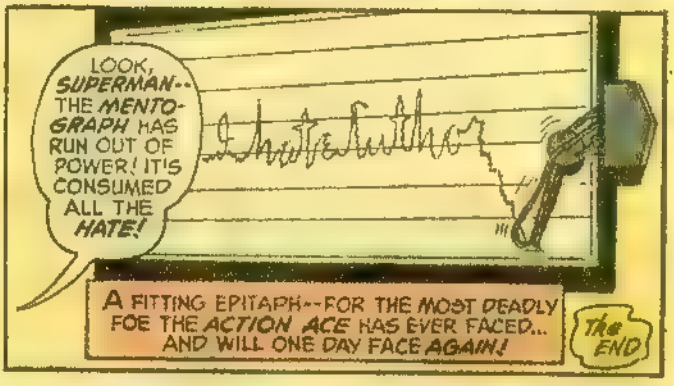

HE'S BROKEN HIS SACRED CODE BY TAKING A HUMAN LIFE!
NOW HE'LL BE GLAD TO LET ME FINISH HIM OFF!
CRASH
OH, I WOULDN'T SAY THAT!
THIS TIME, YOU WON'T BE TELEPORTING YOUR WAY OUT OF HERE!
YOU?! YOU'RE IN CONTROL OF YOURSELF! BUT THE NEWS REPORT SAID--
THE NEWS REPORTS WERE FAKED... TO LURE YOU HERE, INTO THIS TRAP!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? AND WHERE IS ALL THE HATE I HAMMERED INTO YOU?
TWO QUESTIONS -- WITH THE SAME ANSWER, LUTHOR!
SUDDENLY, AN OMINOUS SOFT CLICKING PERVADES THE AIR, OVER THE STEADY HUM OF ELECTRONIC CIRCUITRY, AS LUTHOR LOOKS UP TO SEE.
N-NO! THIS CAN'T BE!
NO WAY!
13


OH, YES IT IS, LUTHOR!
I TRANSFERRED MY HATE INTO THIS MACHINE-- THE MENTO-GRAPH!
A MACHINE?! BUT HOW?
DR. THAMES WAS EXPERIMENTING WITH BRAIN-FUEL-- THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY OF OUR MINDS -- AS A USEABLE POWER-SOURCE FOR FUTURE MACHINES!
RIGHT NOW THE MENTO-GRAPH ISN'T RUNNING ON NORMAL CURRENT AT ALL!
"LAST NIGHT, THAMES AND I DEVISED A MEANS OF TRANSFERRING MY HATRED INTO MENTO-GRAPH, LEAVING ME NORMAL ONCE AGAIN
"EVER SINCE, THE GRAPH HAS BEEN POWERED BY THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY GENERATED BY YOUR HATE, LUTHOR! I'M FREE OF IT!"
BLAST YOU, SUPERMAN! YOU RUINED EVERYTHING!
I HATE YOU ALL OVER AGAIN! EVEN MORE THAN BEFORE!
JUST ONE PUNCH--
UH-OH!
SIDE STEPPING AT THE LAST MOMENT, SUPERMAN PLAYS "MATADOR," AS
--AND I'LL...
THAT, MEAN-LOOKING GLOVE WAS NO DOUBT CREATED TO DO ME IN--
A







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IN THE JUNE SUPERMAN --#264

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IN THE SAME ISSUE, VISIT THE FABULOUS WORLD OF KRYPTON AND LEARN THE AMAZING TRUTH ABOUT

"THE HEAD-BAND WARRIORS OF KRYPTON!"

ON SALE ON OR ABOUT MARCH 8TH!

COMING SUPER-ATTRACTIONS!!

AND IN THE JUNE ACTION --#424

The MAN OF TOMORROW CLASHES WITH THE APE OF TOMORROW in...

"GORILLA GRODD'S GRANDSTAND PLAY!"

DON'T MISS THE FIRST MEETING OF SUPERMAN AND THE SUPER-GORILLA!

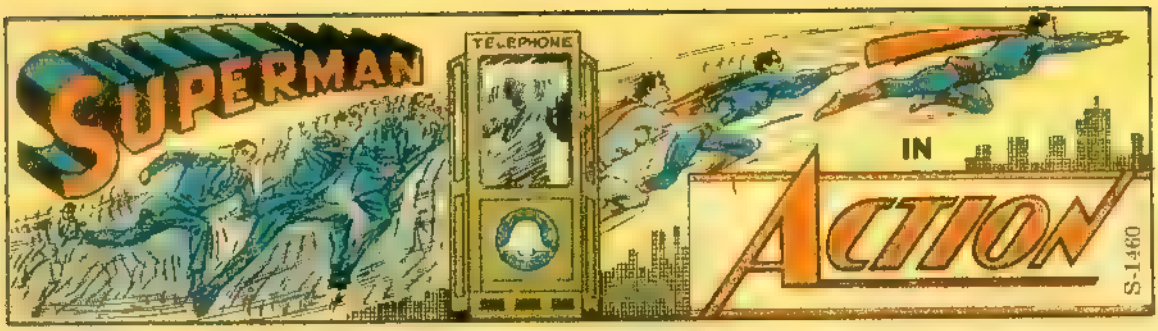
AND THIS ISSUE'S ACTION-PLUS TALE STARS

THE GREEN ARROW

IN A SOLO STORY:

"The CANDY KITCHEN CAPER!"

IT'S ON SALE ON OR ABOUT MARCH 29TH!



Dear Editor:

What can I say? I'm enthralled! *Action* 419 has got to be the best comix mag I've ever seen! That includes everything—bar none!

To start off, the cover. Neal Adams did the most spectacular job ever. And for once, the face actually looked like *Superman!*

Next the lead story, "The Most Dangerous Man on Earth!" Usually I practically hate Cary Bates, but this time, huh-uh. The plot was original and the dialogue perfect. The art was again something else. I'm glad to see your artists did a little research on the NASA space shuttle before trying to draw your fictitious one. Also, finally, we see Curt Swan drawing *Lois* with long hair. The new lettercol logo was just what the doctor ordered.

Your new back feature is sure to be a hit. It's a perfect combo of *Jonny Double* and *Mannix*. And, of course, how could anyone write a letter on #419 without mentioning Carmine Infantino's art? He certainly *hasn't* lost his artist's touch!

Now, although it may sound funny, I probably shouldn't have bought this mag. You see, I have a subscription, and will soon be getting it in the mail. Oh, well—it was *worth it!*

Tom Mitchell, Yakima, Wash.

(What a super-fan you are! Incidentally, it's odd you should mention Jonny Double *in connection with the* Human Target. *When Len Wein and Marv Wolfman were first working out the idea of* Jonny Double, *they planned to make him a* Human Target *taking the places of people threatened with death. Hence the name—*Double! *But the plans were changed and Len wound up using the theme with* Chris Chance.—E.N.B.)

Dear Editor:

After the huge build-up that the *Human Target* series received, I am disappointed. The only thing that saved the story from being a total waste was the Infantino and Giordano art. I'm sure you'll get hordes of comments on the art, so I'll simply say it was beautiful. Unfortunately, the story was not as captivating as the art. The idea of somebody standing in for intended murder victims is a fine idea for a story, but only for a story.

The *Superman* story in this issue wasn't that fantastic, either. Please stop the "fraidy-cat *Clark*" routine. I'm sure most of the readers are as sick of it as I am. And please have *Lois* show a little more interest in *Clark*—and I don't mean by calling him a *klutz.*

Walter Jahnke, Philadelphia, Pa.

(The fact is that we'd neglected Clark's *characterization for some time—and we realized this was an oversight. The difference between mild-mannered* Clark *and mighty* Superman *is basic to the* Superman *legend, and the readers—especially the younger ones, who make up the majority of our readership—like it. Why deprive them of the thrills and laughs of this alter-ego counterpoint just because you've grown "tired" of it after many years of* Superman *reading? We have altered* Lois' *reaction to* Clark *somewhat, from the disdain of the early years to her embarrassed concern for "poor* Clark" *today.*—E.N.B.)

Dear Editor:

The cover of *Action* 419 was fantastic. Usually, covers for *Action* and *Superman* are dull and poorly laid out. But this cover by Adams, Anderson (and photo by Adler?) was probably the best to depict *Superman* in 34 years.

On the inside, "The Most Dangerous Man on Earth" was a somewhat light-hearted tale. It wasn't one of *Superman's* toughest battles, but it was good to see him fight a "two-bit" crook like *Mike Malloy.* Every once in a while we need a story like this to remind us that the world isn't overrun with demons and aliens. We need such a story to remind us there are a few "human demons" out there that have to be taken care of by someone.

Metamorpho is gone . . . but the *Human Target* is really something else! Len Wein and Carmine Infantino (isn't he a publisher of some comix company?) really gave us an *Action-Plus* adventure. More of the *Human Target*, and soon!!!

Joe Peluso, Brooklyn, N.Y.

(You're the one fan who spotted all three of the men who collaborated on that cover. Neal Adams penciled, Murphy Anderson inked, and, sure enough, Jack Adler, of our production department, took the photo—from atop the Empire State Building! Jack also colored the cover!—E.N.B.)

Dear Mr. Schwartz and Mr. Bridwell

I never have really approved of the use of photographs as the background for comix magazine art but on the cover of *Action Comics* #419, it came across as superb. I guess the reason was the startling contrast of *Superman's* uniform against the drab gray of a city.

"The Most Dangerous Man on Earth" was a great tale of science-fiction, exactly the type I enjoy the most. This is one of the best sci-fi adventures I've read in a long time. Cary Bates' intelligent use of present (or forthcoming) science fact was truly brilliant.

The Human Target was very well done. The only thing that marred the tale was its slight similarities with TV's *Banacek*—for instance, the locale in Boston, the expensive home, the ownership of a classic car, and his somewhat over-confident personality. These things can be overlooked, and his personality is logical. After all, to pose as someone who's marked for murder, you have to be sure of yourself. Yes, this should be an excellent series. And I must not neglect to remark that the art by Carmine Infantino and Dick Giordano was super.

James T. McCoy, Jr., Valley Station, Ky.

(The strange part about the resemblances of Chris Chance *and* Banacek *is that the* Human Target *was planned in every detail—and the first story written—before Len Wein had ever seen a* Banacek *show!*—E.N.B.)

Like the letters this issue? Think you could do better? Why not try? The address is SUPERMAN IN ACTION, National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022

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78 ☐ KAMANDI
79 ☐ SWORD OF SORCERY

SCIENCE FICTION

80 ☐ FROM BEYOND THE UNKNOWN
81 ☐ STRANGE ADVENTURES

The HUMAN TARGET

"The DEADLY DANCER CONTRACT!"

ACTION-PLUS
FROM
LEN WEIN
writer
DICK GIORDANO
artist
JULIUS SCHWARTZ
editor

CONTINUED ON THE PAGE FOLLOWING

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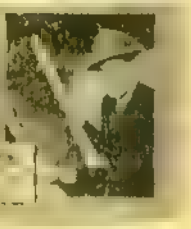

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Job Awa[illegible] ervicement [illegible] L. T., FPO New York

Big Promotion! "[illegible] S. D., Mass

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BLAM

AARRGGHH!

THUNK

...BUT AT THAT POINT, IT REALLY DIDN'T *MATTER* ANYMORE...

ALL RIGHT, PUNK-- *MY* TURN! I'M NOT AS GOOD AT *INITIALS* AS YOUR PAL-- BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A PERMANENT *GRIN* FROM EAR TO EAR!

NOW, *TALK!*

PLEASE, MISTER-- I SWEAR-- WE DON'T KNOW *NOTHIN'!*

WORD WAS OUT ALL OVER THE STREET! SOME DUDE SAID HE'D PAY *HEAVY* TO THE GUY THAT *SPOTTED* YA--AND REPORTED YER LOCATION BACK TO *HIM!*

JEFF AND ME JUST GOT A LITTLE *AMBITIOUS*, IS ALL!

WHO WAS THIS "DUDE"? HOW WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO *CONTACT* HIM?

DON'T *KNOW* HIS NAME--JUST SOME CRAZY GUY WITH A *HEARIN' AID!* HE GAVE US A--A *NUMBER* TO CALL IF WE *FOUND* YA!

N-NOW *PLEASE*-- PUT AWAY THE *BLADE!* IT'S STARTIN' TO MAKE MY *NECK* ITCH!

SURE-- *AFTER* YOU GIVE ME THE NUMBER!

I COMMITTED THE PHONE-NUMBER TO MEMORY-- AND PUT AWAY THE KNIFE AS I HAD PROMISED--

--THEN INCREASED THE PRESSURE OF MY FOREARM AGAINST THE PUNK'S NECK-- UNTIL HE SLIPPED TO THE FLOOR IN A DEEP SLEEP...

I HAD A LONG OVERDUE MEETING TO ATTEND--AND I DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY SPOILING THE SURPRISE...

PYAM!
IT'S FUNNY HOW THESE THINGS BEGIN! I'D BEEN OUT FOR A DRIVE, ENJOYING THE DAY --
-- WHEN A BULLET THROUGH MY WINDSHIELD PUT AN END TO MY DAYDREAMS...
THE TARGET HADN'T BEEN ME -- BUT A STOWAWAY IN THE BACK OF MY CAR...
HIS NAME WAS HYRAM WALSH -- AN ACCOUNTANT TRYING TO EXPOSE THE SYNDICATE -- AND HE WAS BEING HUNTED BY A MAN WITH A HEARING AID --
-- A MAN CALLED DANCER...
LIKE I SAID, IT'S FUNNY -- BECAUSE I KNEW DANCER WELL...
TWENTY YEARS BEFORE, I'D STOOD MUTE WITNESS -- AS DANCER MURDERED MY FATHER...
I HAD A HEARTFUL OF PERSONAL REASONS FOR TAKING THE CONTRACT -- BUT I ALSO HAD A [redacted] TO KEEP -- AN IMAGE TO MAINTAIN...
A TOSS OF A COIN DETERMINED MY FEE --
-- AND I BECAME HYRAM WALSH --
THE DOCUMENTS WALSH NEEDED TO BREAK THE MOB WERE IN A SAFE-DEPOSIT BOX -- THE KEY TO WHICH WAS HIDDEN IN WALSH'S APARTMENT! I'D GONE THERE -- FOUND IT -- AND NOW I HAD MY FIRST SOLID LEAD...
A PHONE-NUMBER -- DANCER'S PHONE-NUMBER! NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS ATTACH AN ADDRESS TO IT!
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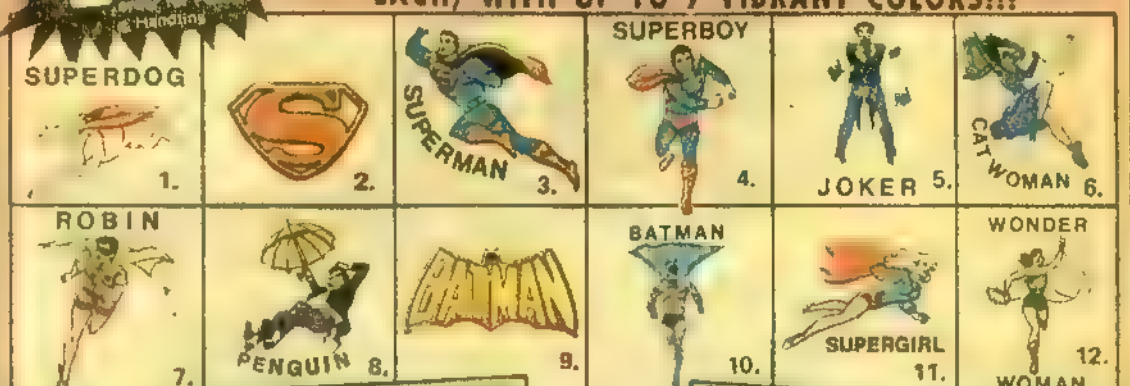

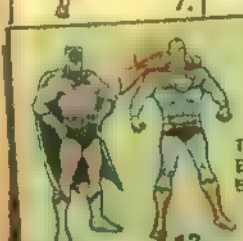

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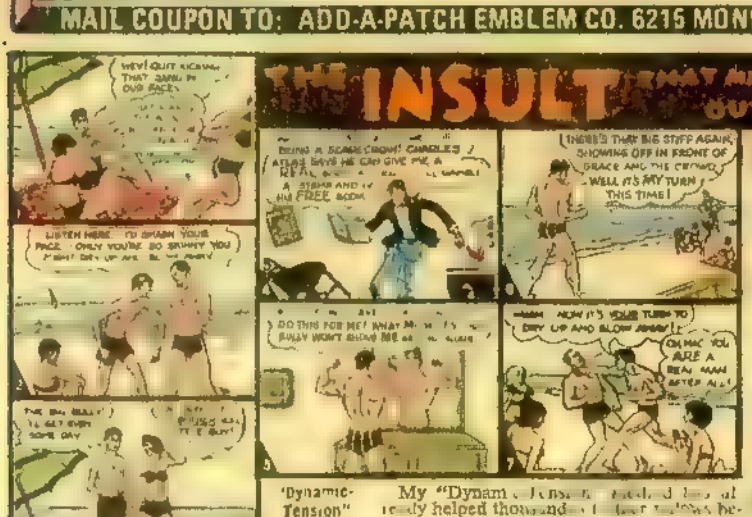

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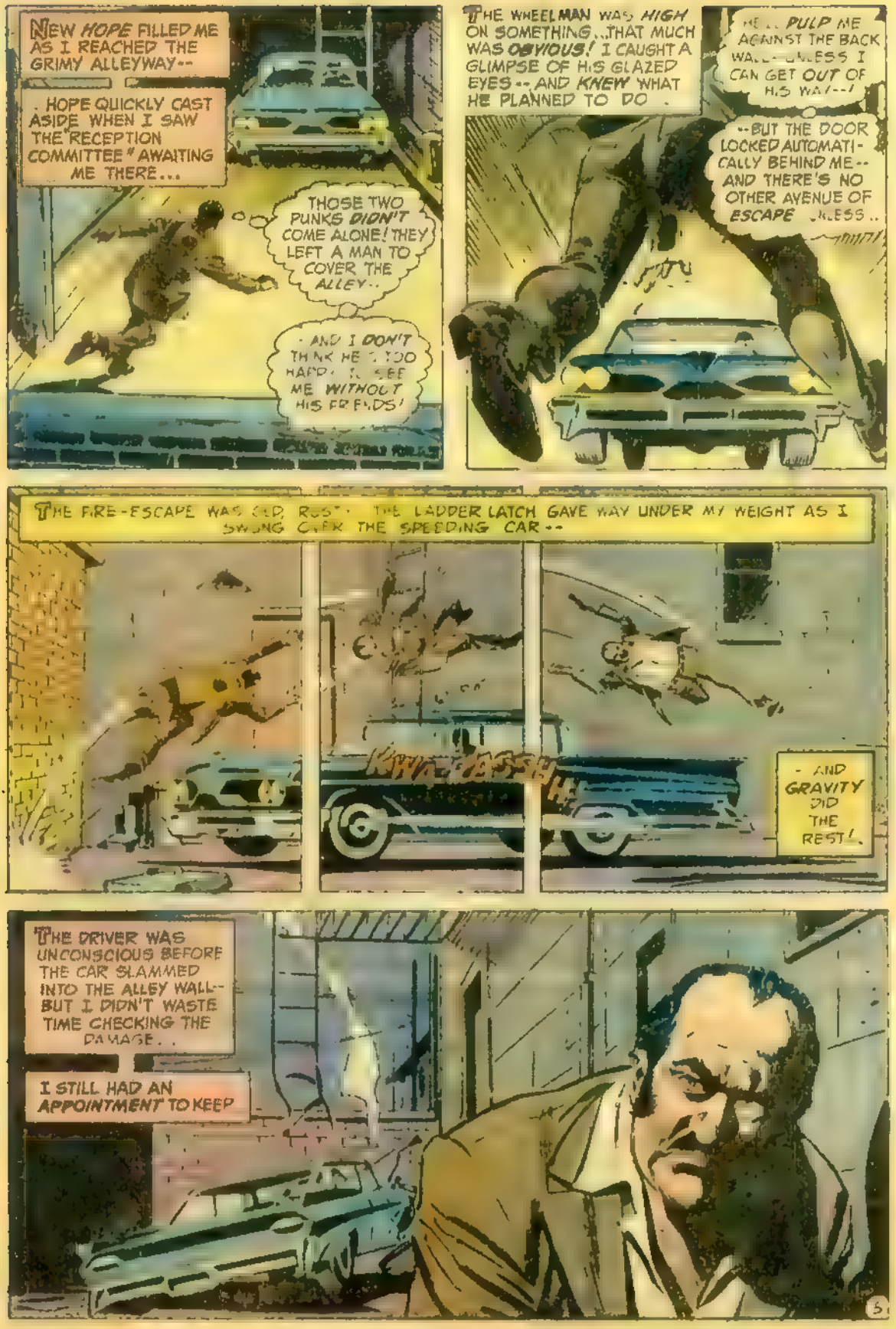
NEW HOPE FILLED ME AS I REACHED THE GRIMY ALLEYWAY--
. HOPE QUICKLY CAST ASIDE WHEN I SAW THE "RECEPTION COMMITTEE" AWAITING ME THERE...
THOSE TWO PUNKS DIDN'T COME ALONE! THEY LEFT A MAN TO COVER THE ALLEY..
. AND I DON'T THINK HE'D TOO HAPPY TO SEE ME WITHOUT HIS FRIENDS!
THE WHEELMAN WAS HIGH ON SOMETHING...THAT MUCH WAS OBVIOUS! I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF HIS GLAZED EYES -- AND KNEW WHAT HE PLANNED TO DO .
HE'D PULP ME AGAINST THE BACK WALL UNLESS I CAN GET OUT OF HIS WAY--!
--BUT THE DOOR LOCKED AUTOMATICALLY BEHIND ME-- AND THERE'S NO OTHER AVENUE OF ESCAPE UNLESS..
THE FIRE-ESCAPE WAS OLD, RUSTY. THE LADDER LATCH GAVE WAY UNDER MY WEIGHT AS I SWUNG OVER THE SPEEDING CAR--
KWA-DASH!
- AND GRAVITY DID THE REST!
THE DRIVER WAS UNCONSCIOUS BEFORE THE CAR SLAMMED INTO THE ALLEY WALL-- BUT I DIDN'T WASTE TIME CHECKING THE DAMAGE..
I STILL HAD AN APPOINTMENT TO KEEP
5

TOOK A CALL TO A FRIEND WITH THE PHONE COMPANY TO ADD THAT ADDRESS TO THE PUZZLE...
THE WILMER THEATER WAS WAITING FOR THE NEW SHOW TO BREATHE RENEWED LIFE INTO ITS DUSTY SHADOWED WINGS
NEW SHOW OPENING MARCH 30
I FELT SLIGHTLY UNEASY AS I PROWLED AROUND BACKSTAGE - AS IF THE SPIRITS OF THE GREAT PERFORMERS WHO HAD PLAYED HERE WERE PERCHED UPON MY SHOULDER
SPIRITS - AND SOMETHING ELSE
EASY, CHANCE -- DON'T GET OVER-ANXIOUS! THIS ONE IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LOSE!
I SENSED THE MOVEMENT BEHIND ME EVEN AS I TURNED--
WANG!
BLANK
AN INSTANT TOO LATE!
HE STEPPED OUT OF THE SHADOWS SLOWLY -- AND I LOOKED INTO HIS FACE. THE SUIT WAS MORE EXPENSIVE -- THE HAIR WAS GETTING GRAY -- MORE LINES AROUND THE FEATURES--
BUT THE MADNESS IN THE EYES -- THE [illegible] GRIN -- THEY HADN'T CHANGED..
DANGER!
SO YOU KNOW ME WALSH -- AIN'T THAT NICE!
BY THE WAY, I OUGHT TO THANK YOU! DON'T KNOW HOW YOU LOCATED ME HERE -- BUT YOU SAVED ME THE TROUBLE OF FINDING YOU!
THIS IS A NICE, QUIET, OUT-OF-THE-WAY SPOT! AIN'T NOBODY GONNA NOTICE NOTHIN'
-WHEN I KILL YOU!
6

DANCER'S FINGER TIGHTENED ON THE TRIGGER JUST AS I PULLED THE SUPPORT ROPES-- AND THE FALLING SANDBAG SENT HIS GUN FLYING!...
HUH?
THE WHOLE SCENE SEEMED LIKE A TIRED CLICHÉ--BUT AT THAT MOMENT, I WAS NOT COMPLAINING...
THUD
BLAM!
TWENTY YEARS HADN'T CHANGED DANCER MUCH -- HE WAS STILL FAST! INSTINCTIVELY, HE LUNGED FOR HIS GUN --
--BUT I WAS STILL FASTER!
UUNNFF!
NO WAY, DANCER! I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS!
YOU MOVE GOOD FOR A FAT MAN -- BUT I'VE BEEN IN THIS BUSINESS FOR TWENTY YEARS--
--AND I AIN'T NO EASY MARK!
DANCER'S AIM WAS EXCEPTIONAL! HE'D KNOCKED ME TOWARDS HIS GUN --
--AND I WASN'T TOO PROUD TO MAKE A MOVE FOR IT...
UH-UH, FATSO--
YOU AIN'T GETTING YOUR HANDS ON MY "PIECE" IF I CAN HELP IT--
AND I CAN...
HELP...
UUNNGG!
THWAAM!

I HAD DANCER COVERED LONG BEFORE HE COULD GET TO HIS FEET...
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT, WALSH? WH-WHAT AM I TO YOU?
ALL RIGHT, ANIMAL-- IT'S OVER!
I'VE WAITED MORE THAN HALF MY LIFE FOR THIS MOMENT!
DON'T YOU KNOW, DANCER?
YOU'RE THE ANIMAL WHO KILLED MY FATHER!
NO-- NOT YOU!!
MY MIND WAS BLANK--FURY CONTROLLED ME COMPLETELY! ALL I COULD SEE WAS THE MAN WHO MURDERED MY FATHER--THE MAN I'D WAITED TWO DECADES TO FIND! MY FINGER BEGAN TO TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGER--
--AND THEN SOMETHING HAPPENED TO DANCER...
NO-- PLEASE DON'T!
PLEASE DON'T KILL ME--!
PLEASE--!
TWENTY YEARS--TWENTY YEARS OF SUSPICION--OF ANXIETY--OF WAITING FOR THE INEVITABLE DAY WHEN THE TABLES WOULD BE TURNED--HAD TAKEN THEIR TOLL OF DANCER...
PL-PLEASE-- PLEASE DON'T HURT ME--! I'LL BE GOOD! I PROMISE I'LL BE GOOD! PL-PLEASE-- SOB PLEASE--!
MY RAGE--MY RESOLVE--DRAINED SLOWLY OUT OF ME--AS I WATCHED DANCER'S FACE COLLAPSE INTO MADNESS...
PLEASE, DADDY-- PLEASE DON'T HIT ME--
PLEASE DON'T HURT ME! I PROMISE I WON'T DO IT ANY MORE!
I'LL BE A GOOD BOY, DADDY--I'LL BE GOOD--
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SON--IT'S ALL RIGHT! YOU'RE SAFE! NOBODY'S GOING TO HURT YOU!
NOBODY WILL EVER HURT YOU AGAIN!
SOB
SOB
SOB
AND I STAYED WITH DANCER, COMFORTING HIM--UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES CAME TO TAKE HIM AWAY...
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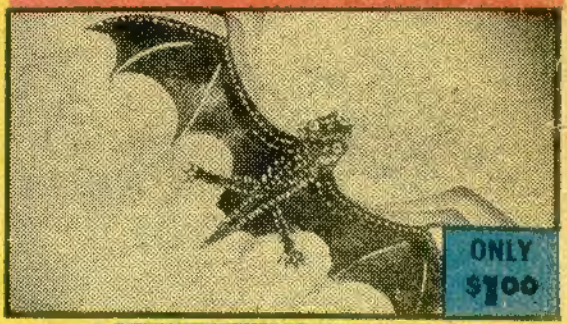

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